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Este pasaje está sacado (y traducido al inglés) del libro The Log of a Cowboy, de Andy Adams, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1971, pages 179-181.

"A mí me era siempre un misterio," dijo Billy Honeyman, "cómo sabe un mexicano o un indio tanto más que nosotros acerca de los caballos. Los he visto rastrear un caballo varias millas a campo traviesa andando a paso largo sin que yo pudiese ver ni huella ni señal. Una vez ayudaba yo a un hombre que criaba caballos a arrear a San Antonio un rebaño de caballos de las tierras de la parte baja del Río Grande. Los arreabamos al mercado a vender, y ya que entonces no había ferrocarriles hacia el sur, tuvimos que traer caballos que nos llevasen a casa después de vendido el rebaño. Siempre solíamos traer caballos favoritos nuestros que no queríamos vender, generalmente dos para cada uno de nosotros. Esta vez, cuando estábamos a cien millas, por lo menos, de la estancia, un mexicano, que había traído un caballo favorito y mimado que debía llevarle a casa, decidió una noche no manear este mimado, suponiendo que el animal no se alejaría de los demás. Pues, la mañana siguiente el caballo había desaparecido. Recorrimos las cercanías y el camino sobre el cual habíamos venido hasta diez millas, pero no encontramos caballo alguno. Siendo la tierra toda rasa, nos sentimos bien seguros de que el caballo volvería a la estancia.

"A los dos días, y unos cuarenta millas el camino arriba, andando el mexicano al frente del rebaño, de repente refrenó su caballo, echándolo atrás hasta que casi se sentó en las ancas, y nos hizo señales que fuésemos a él, sin apartar un momento sus ojos de lo que veía en el camino. El patrón guardaba un lado del rebaño y yo el otro. Nos apresuramos a juntarnos a él y llegamos ambos a la vez. El vaquero exclamó — "¡Aquí está la huella de mi caballo!"

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— "¿Qué caballo?" preguntó el patrón.

— "El mío; el caballo que perdimos hace dos días", respondió el mexicano.

— "¿Cómo sabes que sea la huella de tu caballo estando el camino lleno de millares de otras?" repuso el patrón.

— "Don Tomás", replicó el azteca, alzándose el sombrero, "¿Cómo reconozco entre mil otros su voz de usted o el sonido de su paso?"

Nos reímos de él. Había sido peón*, y eso le hizo respetar nuestra opinión — al menos, se abstuvo de contradecirnos. Pero mientras que seguíamos nuestro camino aquella tarde, podíamos verle al frente, buscando las huellas del caballo. Varias veces se volvió en la silla y miró hacia atrás, señaló alguna huella en el camino y nos levantó su sombrero. Al campamento aquella noche tratamos de hacerle hablar del asunto, pero guardó silencio.

Pero cuando nos acercábamos a San Antonio, alcanzamos unas carretas cargadas de lana, estando paradas porque era el domingo, y allí entre sus caballos y mulas estaba el perdido caballo del mexicano. El propietario de las carretas explicó cómo llegó a tener al caballo. El animal había llegado a su campamento una mañana, a unas 20 millas del lugar donde lo habíamos perdido, mientras que el propietario les daba para comer granos cereales a sus animales de trabajo, y siendo mimado insistió en que se le diese de comer. Desde entonces, yo siempre respeto mucho la opinión sobre un caballo de un Greaser.

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*La versión inglesa emplea la palabra peon, que en inglés significa un casi siervo de la gleba (serf); pero, en español, "peón" quiere decir "labrador, obrero agricultural", y no necesariamente un casi esclavo; aunque se sabe que en algunas partes de la América meridional los obreros agriculturales sí eran (quizás todavía son) casi siervos de la gleba (serfs).

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1

Dear Dave:

In accord with your suggestion, I wrote to Hoken asking him if he could refer me to any philosophical writings on that problem of consciousness that I described to you. But the letter was returned to me with the notation "forwarding address expired". I assume you have Hoken's current address and would appreciate it if you would send it to me so I can send him that letter. If you will send me his address I promise not to bite him, put a tack on his seat, or attempt to draw him into any fraudulent schemes. By the way, what is the correct spelling of his first name? Håkon? Håkan? Håken? Hokum?

Las anécdotas que siguen están sacadas de una vieja gramática del idioma alemán que tengo.

Un forastero campesino que estaba de visita en Londres quiso asistir a un concierto. Acudió a la taquilla a enterarse del precio de los billetes. "Las localidades al frente de la sala, dos shillings; las localidades al fondo de la sala, un shilling; programa, un penny." – "Pues," respondió el forastero, "déme un programa; en éste se puede sentar muy cómodamente".

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Una tarde llegó a un observatorio un (2)
honesto burgués y dijo que había venido a
mirar la Luna por el telescopio. "Venga otra
vez a las cinco horas de aquí; la Luna
no sale hasta las dos de la mañana, y ahora
no son sino las nueve de la tarde." — "Eso
sé muy bien", repuso el visitante, "y por eso
he venido ahora; después de salida la Luna,
la puedo ver sin telescopio."

— Ted

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(1)

Dear Dave—
With regard to your possible trip to Durango, the decision obviously is yours to make, but I would be inclined to encourage you to go. I'm sure the risk of being killed by bandits must be minimal. When I read a little item in the paper a year or 2 ago about several North Americans having been robbed and killed in Mexico, it was said that there was nothing unusual about the number of incidents, and that the U.S. officials were just making a fuss about it to make the Mexicans get on the ball and track down the culprits. Remember that thousands of North Americans go to Mexico every year and only those few were killed. And besides, you'll be travelling by bus, which presumably would be safer as far as robbery is concerned. Personally, I'd worry more about riding on the CTA in Chicago. As for Juan asking you for money or Mexican officials demanding bribes — OK, so suppose you have to spend, say $150 $150.00 on bribes and on Juan's family if you find them destitute or something. You're planning to get a job next

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summer anyway, aren't you? By ~~[illegible]~~ (2)
working 2 weeks longer than you would otherwise you can easily make up the $150. You of course know best what a trip to Durango would be worth to you, but I would think it would easily be worth having to spend a couple of extra weeks working in the summer in order to see Mexico in a way that very few tourists ever get to see it; moreover, you would get to "know the ropes" with regard to travel in Mexico, which would facilitate any other trips that you might want to take later.

You of course would know better than I do, but it seems to me that the only serious worry is the possibility of picking up some parasite from the food or water. You ought to go to some doctor down there in Texas and get his advice on the subject. I know that's an inconvenience, but I think it would be well worth it.

It seems obvious that Juan likes you and has no suspicion that you are a snobbish gringo. It's hard to believe that he would be seriously offended if you explained

60225031 "DUI" K441
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to him that norteamericanos often get ③
sick from drinking unboiled water in
Mexico. Of course you'd offer to boil your
own drinking water. You might also want
to arrange to wash your own dishes in
boiled water, though I imagine something
like chile or soup poured boiling hot into a
bowl would sanitize the bowl. Thoroughly
cooked food should be safe, though you'd
want to avoid raw salads and any
sauces on the side that might not be
sanitary. raw salads are apt to have been washed in unboiled water sauces may be uncooked → in case it has been washed in unboiled water.

Since you might find it awkward to
explain this to Juan in Spanish, the thing to
do would be prepare your speech on the
subject beforehand. Or perhaps it would
be easier if you explained the problem
in your letter to Juan telling him when
you will arrive and so forth.

I know it's embarrassing to bring up
a subject like this with a Mexican
but it's worth it to avoid the risk of
some awful parasite, and, as I said, it's
hard to believe Juan would be seriously
offended by something like that coming
from you whom he knows and likes.

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I think you know enough Spanish ④
to get by with on a trip like that.
If your bad pronunciation caused too much
trouble in some case, you could try
writing what you have to say — though
according to a 20-year-old statistic
that I read recently, some 40% of the
Mexican population is illiterate. Your
written Spanish is getting pretty good to
judge by your last letter.

If I'd gone down to Texas this
winter I'd probably go with you to
Durango, assuming I were welcome.

— Ted

P.S. in answer to your
question — no, I don't think that that story of
Javier de Viana was written for political
motives — in fact I'm practically certain that
it wasn't. First, the story must have been
written at least a couple of decades after
the "White War" in question. Second —
reread the last couple of pages. How would
you reconcile them with the idea that the
author had a political axe to grind?

I'll mention a couple of corrections to
your Spanish — just the ones that seem to me
most important.

When you mentioned writing to Juan you

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wrote "he lo escrito". In the first (5)
place, in Spanish the auxiliary verb
haber is rarely separated by another word
from the past participle with which it is
associated. Thus for example in English we
can write: "I have often fished", "have"
being separated from "fished" by "often"; but
in Spanish this is almost never done. You
can write "he pescado a menudo" or
"a menudo he pescado" but not "he a menudo
pecado". Thus, you should have written
"le he escrito". And note that it is le
and not lo, because the pronoun here is
an indirect objects. Indirect objects can
only be represented by le (or les in the
plural), never by lo, la, los, or las. (True,
la is sometimes used for an indirect object,
but in standard Castillean this is rare,
and it is not considered to be strictly
correct.) Le and les, however, can be used
to represent direct objects also, but only when
the direct objects are masculine persons and not
inanimate things. Of course, I don't know
what they may do in the Northern Mexican dialect.

You wrote: "Si yo no quede enfermo...
si Juan no me pida diñero ... si los
banditos no me mate... si los oficiales no me
robe ... sería una buena aventura!"

First, it's dinero and not diñero; it's bandidos

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and not banditos. Second, you forgot the "n" termination for the 3rd person plural when you wrote "banditos --- mate" and "oficiales --- robe". (Should be maten and roben) Third, if you will look up "sequence of tenses" in your grammar book, you will find that the conditional form sería in the second part of the sentence requires a past subjunctive in the first part of the sentence after the "si", whereas you used the present subjunctive. Thus, one should write: ⑥

"si no hiciese (or hiciera) lluvia, podríamos salir."
past subjunctive (alternative forms) — conditional

"si los bandidos no me matasen (or mataran), sería una buena aventura."
conditional — past subjunctive (alternative forms)

"si nos diese (or diera) dinero, le ayudaríamos."
past subjunctive (alternative forms) — conditional

I must say our literary tastes differ. I thought Quiroga's "Cuentos de la Selva" was very mediocre, but I thought Viana's story "Brothers" was first-rate. Glad you liked "Comendador Mendoza". Interesting psychological study of that woman and the way she affected the young girl. — Ted

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